

TIME	SESSION
12:00PM	Registration Campus Center Auditorium
1:45PM–2:15PM	Welcome Remarks Campus Center Auditorium
2:15PM–2:45PM	<p>Creating Meaningful Experiences in Campus Dining Campus Center Auditorium</p> <p>Domestically and globally, young people continue to face challenges that disrupt behaviors. Beyond economic, political and cultural uncertainty, AI is unmooring individuals from what is real and what can be trusted. Although campus dining cannot control these issues, creating meaningful experiences is possible by understanding how these external forces impact an individual's relationship with food and beverages. Maeve Webster, president of Menu Matters, will discuss how to address evolving core consumer needs to provide unique solutions and those meaningful experiences that create the foundation for a young person's future food and beverage behavior.</p>
2:45PM–3:15PM	<p>Stop Obsessing About Protein and Take Care of your Microbiome Friends Campus Center Auditorium</p> <p>Protein seems to have become a national obsession. First there were protein supplements, then protein bars, and now this includes high-protein Poptarts and bottled waters with added protein. The updated 2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend prioritizing protein at every meal, and include red meat as a good source. Data from the National Health And Nutrition Examination Survey suggest that Americans typically exceed the standard protein recommendation but get half or less of the recommendation for fiber. Animal foods like red meat, pork, chicken, and dairy are all good sources of protein but none of them have any fiber. A hot new topic in Nutrition is the gut microbiome, that we are learning is important for lowering inflammation and improving immune function; dietary fiber fuels our gut microbiome. Legumes and pulses are good sources of both protein and fiber. How often do you eat legumes or pulses? Most Americans eat less than the recommended amount of these, and many do not even know what these are. In a uniquely engaging blend of humor and evidence-based medicine, Professor Gardner will address America's current obsession with protein, and suggest why and how we should be feeding our microbiotic friends, particularly with legumes and pulses.</p>
3:15PM–3:45PM	<p>Ultra-processed Foods: Reimagining the Future of the Grocery Store Campus Center Auditorium</p> <p>This presentation focuses on how the issue of ultra-processed foods can be addressed to create a healthier and more sustainable food supply in the future. It will mainly focus on food design approaches.</p>
3:45PM–4:15PM	General Session IV Campus Center Auditorium
4:00PM–4:15PM	Refreshment Break
4:30PM–4:55PM	Culinary Demo — The Silk Road Kitchen: Persian Nourishment Cooking for the Common Good Campus Center Auditorium
4:55PM–5:10PM	Industry Presentations Campus Center Auditorium
5:10PM–5:55PM	<p>Lifestyle Medicine: The Power and Interconnection of the 6 Pillars Campus Center Auditorium</p> <p>This presentation reviews the science behind the six pillars of lifestyle medicine—nutrition, physical activity, sleep, stress management, avoidance of risky substances, and social connection. In addition, it summarizes current clinical guidelines for each pillar and maps how these domains interact to influence chronic disease risk and resilience. For each pillar, the talk covers key high-quality evidence and practical guideline targets.</p>
6:00PM–8:00PM	Greek Themed Reception and Cutthroat Competition Flagstaff outside Hotel UMass Lobby
8:00PM–9:30PM	<p>Women in Dining Reception Campus Center 11th Floor</p> <p>An opening evening designed to foster connection, mentorship and visibility for women leaders in campus dining, foodservice, nutrition, and industry roles.</p>

TIME	SESSION
7:30AM–8:30AM	Breakfast & Registration BlueWall, Campus Center
8:30AM–8:45AM	Welcome Remarks Campus Center Auditorium
8:45AM–9:30AM	General Session Campus Center Auditorium
9:30AM–10:15AM	Food Systems in America Campus Center Auditorium How can we move forward to a more plant-based sustainable food supply in the current social climate.
10:15AM–10:30AM	Industry Presentation Campus Center Auditorium
10:30AM–10:45AM	Refreshment Break
10:45AM–11:45AM	Dietary Guidelines: What's new, old, and different from previous years Campus Center Auditorium A critical review of the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans, examining how recommendations have evolved, where inconsistencies remain, and what evidence means for institutional menu planning and nutrition communication, and public-facing food programs.
11:45AM–12:00PM	Refreshment Break
12:00PM–12:30PM	Culinary Demo Campus Center Auditorium
12:30PM–1:00PM	Is there a path for healthy and sustainable diets for all? Campus Center Auditorium Our world is on a path to environmental disaster and almost every country is experiencing epidemics of obesity and diabetes. Our current food system is fueling these disasters, but changing the foods we produce and consume offers potential ways to shift our direction. Food services will need to play a critical role in transitioning to a healthy and sustainable future; these opportunities and potential benefits will be discussed.
1:00PM–1:30PM	Conversation with Campus Leadership on Challenges and Opportunities Join a Chancellor and a CFO for a candid conversation about the major challenges and opportunities facing higher education today. Topics will include the state of higher education, shrinking revenue streams and rising operational costs, technological disruption and the impact of AI on teaching, operations, and student experience, and the benefits of having a robust campus dining program.
1:30PM–2:15PM	Tour of the UMass Food Bank with Mariana Chilton For Healthcare providers. See the amazing new space that in collaboration with the Amherst Survival Center offers a full-choice, self-guided shopping experience for all members of the campus community who need it.
1:30PM–2:30PM	Lunch Campus Center BlueWall
3:00PM–6:00PM	Culinary Workshops Campus Center Mood Food: Common Culinary Herbs and Spices to Elevate Mood, Boost Concentration, and Promote an Overall Sense of Calm · Afro-Peruvian Fire: Bold Flavors of Peru's Criollo Kitchen · The Silk Road Kitchen: Persian Nourishment Cooking for the Common Good · Comfort Without Borders: From Arepas in Boston to Curry Udon in Nashville · Hands to Dough, Goodness to Go: The Sourdough Baguette · Bring the Streets of Thailand to Your Campus! · Japanese Sando Workshop · Harvest To Hearth: Turning Local Produce Into Everyday Favorites · Mexican Comfort Food, the food that nourishes both the body and the soul · Cooking for the Common Good · Mediterranean Roots · Taste the Sun: Healthy Haitian Cooking Bursting with Heart and Flavor

3:00PM–4:00PM	<p>Concurrent Nutrition Session — Managing the Grey Areas: A Physician’s Guide to Food Allergy Risk in Foodservice Settings Campus Center, 1st Floor, Room 163</p> <p>Food allergy management on campus is often complicated by a gap between clinical data and dining hall reality. Students frequently arrive with outdated, unclear, or evolving diagnoses, leaving dining teams to navigate the risks of overreporting and underdiagnosis. Drawing on her latest research, Dr. Ruchi Gupta provides a practical framework for interpreting student data and managing risk in a non-clinical environment. Attendees will walk away with clear guiding principles to build dining systems that are scientifically grounded, operationally flexible, and above all, student-centered.</p>
4:00PM–5:00PM	<p>Setting a Safer Table: Managing Alpha-Gal Syndrome (Concurrent Nutrition Session) Campus Center, 1st Floor, Room 163</p> <p>Alpha-gal syndrome is a tick-borne condition that triggers serious reactions to red meat and mammalian byproducts, and meets FDA requirements to be considered the 10th major food allergen. But this session isn’t about clinical protocols. It’s about what it means to safely feed everyone. Using a systems-change framework, we’ll explore how university dining operations can move from reactive accommodation to proactive inclusion by building a food safety culture, training, and menu infrastructure so that every student has a seat at a safer table. Because food for the common good only works when the system is built for everyone.</p>
5:00PM–6:00PM	<p>Concurrent Nutrition Session — Food, Culture, and Connection: Building Trust Through Nutrition Campus Center, 1st Floor, Room 163</p> <p>This session explores how culture, identity, and lived experience shape the way people engage with food and nutrition guidance. Speakers will share practical strategies for creating culturally responsive dining experiences, cooking demonstrations, and communication approaches that build trust, respect traditions, and drive meaningful behavior.</p>
7:00PM–9:00PM	<p>Clambake and Cut Throat Event Campus Center</p>
9:00PM	<p>Networking at the UPub UPub, Campus Center 2nd Floor</p>

TIME	SESSION
7:00AM–7:45AM	Yoga 10th Floor Hadley Room, Campus Center
7:30AM–8:30AM	Breakfast & Registration Lower Level, Campus Center
8:30AM–9:00AM	How to Win Students' Trust Campus Center Auditorium Vice President Mike Kostyo will dive deeper into the concrete tactics that college and university decision-makers can use to gain students' trust and create a long-term relationship during their time on campus.
9:00AM–9:30AM	The Human + AI Equation: Judgment Is the Competitive Advantage Campus Center Auditorium Anat Baron explores how leaders can use AI and other technologies to improve operations, support growth, and elevate the dining experience without surrendering the judgment, storytelling, and human connection no algorithm can replace.
9:30AM–9:45AM	Industry Presentations Campus Center Auditorium
9:45AM–10:00AM	Refreshment Break
10:00AM–10:45AM	Ultra-Processed Foods Panel Campus Center Auditorium A multidisciplinary discussion on the health implications of ultra-processed foods, how they are defined, and what the evidence suggests for menu development, nutrition policy and public messaging.
10:45AM–11:00AM	Industry Presentations Campus Center Auditorium
11:00AM–11:30AM	General Session Campus Center Auditorium
11:30AM–11:45AM	Refreshment Break
11:45AM–12:00PM	Culinary Demo Campus Center Auditorium
12:00PM–1:00PM	C-Suite Panel: Partnering for the Common Good Campus Center Auditorium Pathways to a New Food Ecosystem Through Collaboration. Exploring how manufacturers are adapting to manage costs and how stronger collaborative models with operators can help meet current challenges.
12:00PM–1:00PM	Handling Nutrition Misinformation on Social Media (Concurring Session) Campus Center, 1st floor, Room 163 This session equips professionals with tools to identify misinformation, respond effectively online, and communicate nuanced nutrition science in an accessible way.
1:00PM–3:30PM	Industry Showcase & Lunch BlueWall, Campus Center Connect, eat and experience what's new and exciting with over 50 conference partners.
3:30PM–6:30PM	Hands-On Workshops (Concurrent) Sessions include: Healthy Haitian Cooking (Pamela Adams), Mood Food (Rebecca Peizer), Afro-Peruvian cuisine (Ricky Moore), Persian Nourishment (Hoss Zaré), Global Comfort Foods (Steve Petusevsky), Sourdough Baguette (Lumi Cirstea), Streets of Thailand (Chai Siriyarn), Japanese Sando (Hiroo Nagahara), Harvest To Hearth (Matt Jennings), Mexican Comfort Food (Iliana de la Vega & Ana Torrealba), and So Much Matcha!!!! (John Masi).
3:30PM–5:00PM	The Language of Olive Oil: Guided Tasting Campus Center, 1st floor, Room 167 A guided tasting and sensory evaluation focusing on the culinary and health attributes of extra virgin olive oil.

3:30PM–4:30PM	<p>Designing Menus for Sensory Sensitivities (Concurring Nutrition Session) Campus Center, 1st floor, Room 163</p> <p>Practical strategies to design menus and dining systems that support neurodivergent students with sensory sensitivities.</p>
4:30PM–5:30PM	<p>Eating for Trillions: Translating Microbiome Science into Practice (Concurring Nutrition Session) Campus Center, 1st floor, Room 163</p> <p>Interest in the gut microbiome continues to grow, but applying this science in real-world settings is complex. This session reviews key functions of the gut microbiome and its relationship to gut health, with an emphasis on how diet shapes the microbiome. Dietary patterns, particularly those rich in fiber and diverse plant-based foods, along with fermented foods, probiotics, and prebiotics, will be discussed. Practical considerations for translating this science into nutrition and foodservice settings will be highlighted, including strategies for incorporating gut health principles into menus and everyday eating patterns</p>
5:30PM–6:30PM	<p>Researching Behaviors to Architect Choices (Concurring Nutrition Session) Campus Center, 1st floor, Room 163</p> <p>Exploring choice architecture levers that can be used to “nudge” individuals toward healthier and more sustainable options.</p>
7:30PM–9:30PM	<p>Evening Dinner Outside Campus Center</p>
9:30PM	<p>Networking at the UPub UPub, Campus Center 2nd Floor</p>

TIME	SESSION
7:30AM–8:30AM	Breakfast & Registration Worcester Commons
8:30AM–9:30AM	Student Panel — Student Voices: The Future of Campus Dining Worcester Commons College students from across the United States and Canada share firsthand experiences, preferences, and expectations for on-campus foodservice, including perspectives on technology, dietary inclusivity, and the overall dining experience.
9:30AM–10:00AM	Concurring Healthcare and Nutrition Session — Teaching Kitchens and Food is Medicine Discussion Campus Center, 1st floor, Room 163 An overview of teaching kitchens and their application in campus, clinical, and community settings, highlighting collaboration between chefs and healthcare providers.
10:00AM–10:30AM	Innovating Innovation: Rethinking the Purpose and Process of Change in Food Worcester Commons Ideas for ensuring the relevance and success of food innovation efforts amidst constant consumer and economic shifts.
10:30AM–3:30PM	Hands On Workshops (Johnson and Wales University Faculty) Cooking With Campus Clubs: Nico SanFilippo The Campus Test Kitchen: Matthew Britt Threads of Time: Noodles, Culture, and Human Longevity: Branden J Lewis Stop the Crash: Designing Breakfast Menus That Last: Stacy Mirabello Culturally Authentic, Protein-Forward Menus: Jonathan Poyourow
10:30AM–12:30PM	Leadership Symposium Campus Center Auditorium
12:30PM–1:30PM	Technology Panel — Connected Innovation for the Common Good Campus Center Auditorium Exploring how integration, interoperability, and AI are shaping a customer-centered food ecosystem to reduce operational burden and labor friction.
1:30PM–2:30PM	Lunch
2:30PM–3:30PM	Employees Come First The importance of employee wellbeing and how it translates into superior guest engagement.
3:30PM–4:30PM	Procurement Panel
6:30PM–8:30PM	Grand Banquet Student Union Ballroom
8:30PM	Networking at the UPub UPub, Campus Center 2nd Floor

TIME	SESSION
7:30AM–8:30AM	Breakfast & Registration Worcester Commons
9:00AM–11:00AM	Elevate Your Leadership with Emotional Intelligence (Concurring Nutrition Session) Campus Center Room 163 An interactive session focusing on self-evaluation and strategies for the four emotional intelligence domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.
9:30AM–10:00AM	Directors Panel — Food is Life: Come for the Education, Stay for the Food Worcester Commons Award-winning campus dining directors share perspectives on elevating programs, navigating rising costs, and addressing food insecurity.
10:00AM–2:30PM	Hands On Workshops (Johnson and Wales University Faculty) Beyond the Plate: Immersive Campus Events: Nico SanFilippo The Flavor Bridge: Home Eating to Campus Dining: Matthew Britt From Mystery to Mastery: Training Chefs for Adaptive Cooking: Branden J Lewis Comfort, Rewired: Reinventing Campus Classics: Stacy Mirabello Global Proteins, Shared Table: Diverse Menus: Jonathan Poyourow
11:45AM–12:15PM	Inclusive Dining by Design: Supporting Allergens, Culture, and Choice Campus Center Room 163 A look at the University of Michigan's approach to embedding inclusivity into everyday service through heritage programming and allergen awareness.
12:15PM–12:45PM	INDIGO Kitchen: A Commissary Approach to University Dining Accommodations Campus Center Room 163 Cornell Dining shares insights from their centralized production model for accommodated meals.
12:00PM–4:00PM	Golf Tournament (By Invitation Only) Contact Christopher Howland for consideration.
1:00PM–2:00PM	Lunch for Dietitians Campus Center
2:00PM–4:00PM	Campus Nutrition Collective: Advancing the Role of the Dietitian An interactive working session to shape best practices and mentorship models for campus RDs.
3:00PM–5:00PM	ACF Sanctioned Team Competition Worcester Commons Twelve teams of four compete in a mystery basket hot food competition.
5:00PM	Dinner on Your Own
8:30PM	Networking at the UPub UPub, Campus Center 2nd Floor

TIME	SESSION
7:00AM	<p>ACF Sanctioned Team Competition Worcester Commons</p> <p>The hot food competition continues as twelve teams of four work with mystery baskets to prepare 10 servings for a panel of national judges. This high-stakes event determines the best culinary team in the nation.</p>
3:00PM	<p>Awards and Medals Presentation Worcester Commons</p> <p>The formal conclusion of the competition and conference, recognizing the winners and participants of the ACF Sanctioned Team Competition.</p>